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The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society is an informal organization of several hundred students and followers of the life and works of Henry David Thoreau. Membership is open to anyone interested. Fees are one dollar a year. This bulletin is issued occasionally, usually quarterly, by the secretary. All the material, unless otherwise assigned, is compiled and written by the secretary.

The officers of the society are Raymond Adams, Chapel Hill, N.C., president; Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, Concord, Mass., vice-president; and secretary-treasurer:

Walter Harding
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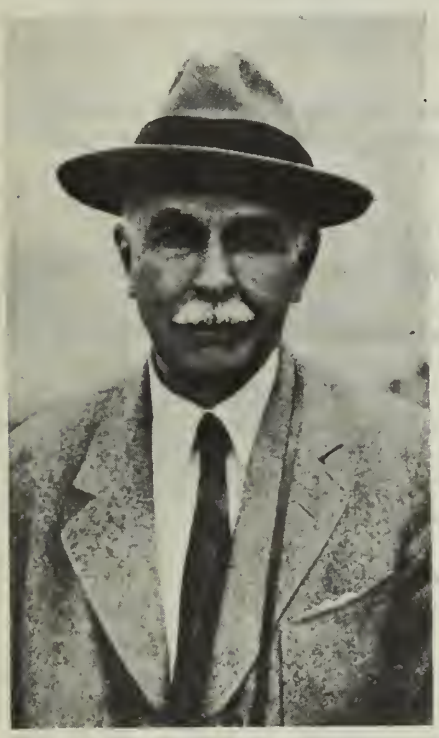
IN TRIBUTE TO FRANCIS H. ALLEN



Karl Maslowski
Francis H. Allen

When one reads through the literary history of our country, he is struck with the remarkable ascent in Thoreau's fame and stature from an almost complete obscurity in the years just after his death to his present rank among the greatest American authors. It was not just chance that he was rescued from oblivion. It was due to the devotion of a mere handful of ardent disciples who strived to get his writings into print and before the eye of the reading public. We are all deeply indebted to the pioneering of such men as H.G.O.Blake, Alexander Japp, S. A. Jones, Henry Salt, and, far from the least, to Francis H. Allen.

Mr. Allen was born in Jamaica Plain, Mass., four years after the death of Thoreau, and grew up in the vicinity of Brook Farm, where he developed an early interest in bird lore. In 1884 he entered the employ of the Houghton, Mifflin & Company, Thoreau's hereditary publishers, where he remained for forty years. When, in 1906, his firm published Thoreau's complete writings in twenty volumes, he was chosen to edit the fourteen volumes of journals. In 1908 he issued his A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, which has remained ever since the standard bibliographphy , so nearly complete that only supplements to bring it up-to-date have been needed In 1910 he edited WALDEN for the Riverside Literature Series, which has remained the most authoritative edition. In that same year he brought forth an anthology of Thoreau's bird notes entitled NOTES ON NEW ENGLAND BIRDS (later reissued as THOREAU'S BIRD LORE). In 1927 he issued Thoreau's lecture THE MOON. And in 1936 he issued that gem of all Thoreau anthologies, MEN OF CONCORD. It is a sad fact that not a single one of these volumes is now in print. But all are eagerly sought for in the secondhand book stores. His publishers could make no better contribution to Thoreau scholarship than to reissue each and every one of these volumes.

This is only a very partial listing of Mr. Allen's contribution to the Thoreau world. He has written innumerable articles and has always been the first to protest at the carelessness or inaccuracy of any other editions of or writings on Thoreau. Yet his protests have always been most gentlemanly, and he has always been most generous with his time in aiding other Thoreau scholars in their efforts. I, for one, am deeply grateful to Mr. Allen for his assistance in my Thoreau research and for his aid in bringing forth these publications of the Thoreau Society.

Those of you who have been able to attend our annual meetings in Concord have had the privilege of meeting him there nearly every year. His genial smile and genuine friendliness have meant much to us all. At one of our meetings he delivered a memorable paper on the editing of Thoreau's works which is still on the publishing agenda of the society. And in this

bulletin we are pleased to be able to present a brief paper of his which reflects the care and precision which he puts into all his writings. In recognition of his contribution to Thoreau scholarhip, we wish to dedicate this issue of the THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN to Mr. Francis H. Allen, now in his eighty-third year and still the leader of his field. WH

THOREAU'S TRANSLATIONS FROM PINDAR

by FRANCIS H. ALLEN

It is not generally known that the "Translations from Pindar" included in EXCURSIONS AND POEMS in the Walden Edition of Thoreau's Works and in MISCELLANIES of the Riverside Edition lack one of the odes that were included when they were first published in THE DIAL in 1844. This ode, "Origin of Thera," appeared on page 385 of Volume IV of THE DIAL. It follows "Peleus and Cadmus" and precedes "Apollo" from the Pythia v. 87--90, which appears on page 383 of EXCURSIONS AND POEMS and on page 347 of MISCELLANIES. It reads as follows (punctuation as in THE DIAL):

Pyth. IV.--59.

ORIGIN OF THERA,

Whence, in after times, Libyan Cyrene was settled by Battus. Triton, in the form of Eurypilus, presents a clod to Euphemus, one of the Argonauts, as they are about to return home.

He knew of our haste,
And immediately snatching a clod
With his right hand, strove to give it
As a chance stranger's gift.
Nor did the hero disregard him, but leaping
upon the shore,
Stretching hand to hand,
Received the mystic clod.
But I hear it sinking from the deck,
Go with the sea brine
At evening, accompanying the watery sea.
Often indeed I urged the careless
Menials to guard it, but their minds forgot.
And now in this island the imperishable seed of
spacious Libya
Is spilled before its hour.

It is not clear why this ode was omitted from the group that found its first publication in book form in the volume of MISCELLANIES (1893), but it may be that Mr. Horace E. Scudder, the editor, considered the translation too faulty to be worthy of perpetuation. Thoreau certainly made an unfortunate error in the line "But I hear it sinking from the deck." The Greek word <u>peuthomai</u> means "I hear," to be sure, but not in the physical sense, Its literal meaning is "I learn by hearsay." A closer translation of the three lines might be:

But I hear that, washed down from the deck at evening, it swept out with the sea brine and sought the watery sea.

Sir John Sandys in his translation of Pindar (1915) makes it, "But they tell me that it was washed out of the ship and passed into the sea with the spray at eventide, following the waters of the main."

I find another error in the transcription of these Pindar translations from THE DIAL. Before "The Freedom of Greece" on page 390 of EXCURSIONS AND POEMS and on page 355 of MISCELLANIES a note should appear stating that the following fragments of Pindar are found in ancient authors. This is clear from a note on page 513 of the DIAL, Vol. IV. "The Freedom of Greece" in THE DIAL has no author's name before it, but the fragments that follow it show that they are found in Strabo, Plutarch, and four other authors. The omission of such a note as I have suggested led Professor Ernest E. Leisy in his list of "Sources of Thoreau's Borrowings in A WEEK" (AMERICAN LITERATURE, March, 1946) to state that Thoreau attributed the lines, "Were it the will of heaven, an osier bough Were vessel safe enough the seas to plow," to Plutarch, whereas Thoreau was clearly citing Pindar as the original author and an "old translator of Plutarch" only as responsible for the wording of the translation.

A small error, doubtless typographical, is the substitution of the plural "exaggerations" for the "exaggeration" of THE DIAL in the Pindar fragment from Aelius Aristides.

One is sorry to discover slips in the work of so scholarly an editor as Horace E. Scudder, but when they concern Thoreau they should be corrected.

A NEW YORK THOREAU MEETING. Nearly a hundred people attended a meeting of the Thomas Wolfe Biography Club at New York University on November 23, 1948, which was devoted to the life and philosophy of Thoreau. Clayton Hoagland spoke briefly of the centenary of A WEEK in 1949 and then introduced Max Cosman of Brooklyn, who outlined the life of Thoreau and his activities as writer, speaker, and naturalist. Leonard Kleinfeld read a paper on "Thoreau's "Pursuit of Happiness," which interpreted the main principles of T's philosophy.

Miss Rella Ritchell will conduct a Thoreau meeting at the Towers Hotel in Brooklyn on January 20, 1949, with Dr. Witherspoon Dodge as the speaker.

Dr. Raymond Adams will read a paper on the "Bibliographical History of Thoreau's WEEK" at the January meeting of the Bibliographical Society of America. We hope for a fuller report of this later.

A number have written in asking about Thoreau MacDonald, illustrator of Henry Beston's new NORTHERN FARM : A CHRONICLE OF MAINE (New York: Rinehart, 1948). We wrote to Mr. MacDonald at his home in Thornhill, Ont., and received the following reply, "It's my real & only given name, though of course I was called after H. D. Thoreau, my father being an admirer of his. I also have been a lifelong reader of H.D.T." That interest certainly reflects itself in his drawings and personally we would like to see him illustrate WALDEN someday. Mr. Beston's book, incidentally, will delight all of you who delight in Thoreau's nature writings. There is not as much direct mention of Thoreau as in his earlier book THE OUTERMOST HOUSE. But the spirit is there.

Dr. F.S.Piper of Lexington, Mass., has written asking where in Thoreau's writings this occurs: "If a man were to place himself in an attitude to bear manfully the greatest evil that could be inflicted on him he would suddenly find there was no evil to bear." Can anyone help him?

THOREAU SOCIETY BOOKLETS. We are issuing with this bulletin THOREAU SOCIETY BOOKLET #6. It is a series of drawings by May Alcott, sister of the more famous Louisa May Alcott. These sketches were hitherto unpublished and it is through the kindness of Mr. Albert E. Lownes of Providence, R.I., present owner of the original sketches, that we are able to print them. They have been left unbound so that they may be framed. Extra copies of the booklet may be obtained from the secretary for fifty cents.

Enclosed with the October Bulletin was THOREAU SOCIETY BOOKLET #5: THOREAU'S DIPLOMA. We are sorry that the reproduction of the diploma was not clearer, but the combination of a faded original document and having to be reproduced through several different processes before it reached print made a clearer printing impossible.

In October the NEW YORK TIMES ran a review of Krutch's HENRY DAVID THOREAU. They entitled the review "Thoreau: 'Cracking the Hard Facts.'" We hear that Sloane, the publisher of Mr. Krutch's book has been receiving orders for Thoreau's "Cracking the Hard Facts" ever since. . . And, on the same subject, the JOHNSONIAN NEWSLETTER, VIII (Oct., 1948), 8, says, "After a long struggle trying to find some connection between Dr. Johnson and Thoreau, the subjects for successive biographies by J.W.Krutch, we finally hit upon the obvious answer. Both men liked cats. And so does Krutch."

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"Nonsense! Mr. Thoreau will be delighted to see us!"

Reprinted with permission from the SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, Oct. 9, 1948.

The N.Y.HERALD TRIBUNE for Nov. 5, 1948, reports the murder of a boy by Wallace York, a recluse "who constructed a kind of Walden Pond cabin in Brooklyn." We dislike the cheap sensationalism of connecting Walden with this sad event and can think of no less Walden-like act.

Robert Graham of Sag Harbor, L.I., suggests that members of our society present copies of WALDEN to exceptional students in local schools. We might add, have you checked your local library to see if Thoreau's works are available there? A copy presented to your library would bring a great many people pleasure.

Among others we are indebted to C. Hoagland, R.Adams, R.Ritchell, R.Graham, E. Wilson, R. Robbins, and E. Anderson for suggesting material used in this bulletin. The secretary would appreciate your calling his attention to any books, articles, clippings or events pertaining to Thoreau so that he may make a better bulletin.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ballou, Adin. "October at Walden." N.Y.HERALD TRIB. Oct. 11, 1948. A sonnet.

_____. "The Poet's Pine." CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR. June 21, 1948. A sonnet.

_____. "Supper at Sunset." N.Y.HERALD TRIBUNE. Sept. 13, 1948. A sonnet.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. THOREAU'S PENCILS: AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER FROM RALPH WALDO EMERSON TO CAROLINE STURGIS 19 MAY 1844. Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Library. January 6, 1944. Houghton Library Brochure #4. Limited to 75 copies, numbered with a Thoreau pencil.

Johnson, Thomas H. "Henry David Thoreau." in Spiller, Thorp, Johnson, Canby. THE LITERARY HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. New York: Macmillan, 1948. III, 742-746. $20.00. A bibliography of Thoreau and Thoreauviana to date. See Scudder below.

Kramer, Sid & Sonia. "Thoreau Job Done on Walden Creator." THE EVENING NEWS (Washington Sq. College, N.Y.U.). December 9, 1948. pp. 1,3. A detailed account of a meeting devoted to Thoreau.

Krutch, Joseph Wood. HENRY DAVID THOREAU. Reviews: Anon. ATLANTIC MONTHLY, CLXXXII (Dec., 1948), 113-4.; Anon. TRENTON (N.J.) TIMES. Nov. 7, 1948. p. 10; Anon. LIBRARY JOURNAL, LXXIII (Sept. 1, 1948), 1189; Bode, Carl. NATION, CLXVII (Oct. 16, 1948), 433-5; Cournos, John. N.Y. EVENING SUN. Oct. 4, 1948.; Crane, Milton. SRL, XXI (Nov. 13, 1948), 12; Wade, Mason. COMMONWEAL, XLIX (Oct. 15, 1948), 17; Zahniser, Howard. NATURE MAGAZINE, XLI (Dec., 1948), 506-7.

McCabe, Joseph F. ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE. Girard, Kans.; Haldeman-Julius, 1948. $3.00. A brief life of T. included.

MacDougall, Sally. "Thoreau Fan Studies at Walden Pond." N.Y. WORLD TELEGRAM. Sept. 20, 1948. p. 23. About Rella Ritchell and T. Similar article: Anon. "Poetess, Here 21 Yrs., Became World Famous." BROOKLYN EAGLE SUN. Sept. 12, 1948. p. 10.

P., M. "Thoreau-Alcott House May Be Opened to the Public." WORCESTER (Mass.) GAZETTE TELEGRAM. July (?), 1948. Account of society fund drive.

Schultz, Howard. "A Fragment of Jacobean Song in Thoreau's WALDEN." MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES, LXIII (April, 1948), 271-2. A source for a bit in WALDEN.

Scudder, Townsend. "Henry David Thoreau." in Spiller, Thorp, Johnson, Canby. THE LITERARY HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. I, 383-415 (See Johnson above.) The publication of this literary history is a major event in the field of American literature. It is the most comprehensive study of the field since the Cambridge History of World War I days, and it was sadly needed. The Thoreau article is typical of the care and thought which went into the making of these volumes. In a comparatively brief space we find a comprehensive study of Thoreau's life, works, and significance. The adjoining chapters give a full picture of the times of Thoreau--although we regret that many of the minor figures of Transcendentalism have been missed. The bibliography volume (see above, Johnson) is the finest of its type we have ever seen and should open many new fields of research to the student. Maybe we are prejudiced, but we do think that our society's publications should have been listed in the bibliography.

Stewart, Randall. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: A BIOGRAPHY. New Haven, Conn. Yale Univ. Press, 1948. 279pp. $4.00. Biographies of Hawthorne have been numerous, but rarely has there been a temperate one. Now Randall Stewart, who for many years has led the way in research into Hawthorne's life, has produced one that is brief, to the point, and sane. It is the volume to which all who want a definitive biography should turn. References to Thoreau are numerous throughout the book, including the little-known fact that Hawthorne helped to spread Thoreau's reputation in England. We wonder with Prof. Stewart if Hawthorne had lived to write his planned sketch of Thoreau, might not Thoreau have much earlier attained his just position in the ranks of our literary great.

Thoreau, Henry David. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN. Chicago: Great Books Foundation, 1948. 59pp. (Henry Regnery Co., Hinsdale, Ill., pub. $.75) Another inexpensive pamphlet edition of Thoreau.

_____. "Walking" in E.V.Mitchell, ed. THE PLEASURES OF WALKING. New York: Vanguard Press, 1948 pp. 129-172. $2.50. A new edition of a delightful little anthology for inveterate hikers, which for the first time includes Thoreau's memorable essay on the subject.

Thorpe, James. "English and American Literature in the McCormick Collection: Some Bibliographical Notes." PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY CHRONICLE, X (Nov., 1948), 16-41. Includes an account of the Thoreau manuscripts and first editions in this collection.

Traysser, Donald. "Once Upon A Time on Cape Cod." CAPE CODDER. Oct. 7, 1948. p.2. On Thoreau on Cape Cod.

Wall, Mary B. "Verdict of Time." KALEIDOGRAPH. August, 1948. A poem on Thoreau.

Wood, James Playsted. "Mr. Thoreau Writes a Book." THE NEW COLOPHON, I (Oct., 1948), 367-376. An account of the 1849 publication of A WEEK.